

Weekly Police Beat for the week ending February 17, 2017

Distracted Driving is Dangerous: Put it Down and *Drive!*

What is distracted driving?

Anything that diverts a motorist's attention away from the primary task of driving results in distracted driving. There are 3 basic forms of distraction: *visual* (taking your eyes off the road), *manual* (taking your hands off the wheel) and *cognitive* (taking your mind off of driving). While all distracted driving is dangerous, those activities that involve all three forms of distraction are the worst such as:



- Texting (reading, writing and sending a text)
- Using a cell phone or smartphone
- Eating or drinking
- Reading, including maps
- Manipulating GPS, radio, CD player or other device

How bad is the problem?

Here is what we know: distracted driving **kills 9** people and **injures 1,060 every day** in the U.S. (NHTSA). As grim as these numbers are, the scope of the problem is likely much larger. The National Safety Council has completed at least one study which shows that distracted driving is woefully underreported. We see it everywhere every day. Some people appear to be nearly addicted to their electronic devices. Don't be one of them. Stop it. Just drive. In Maryland, it is illegal to read or send messages, check Facebook, etc. even while you are stopped. Put the phone where you can't get to it if you can't trust yourself to ignore your device. You will hurt yourself or someone else sooner or later. It is not worth it.